

## Remarks at the National Governors' Association Dinner *February 24, 2002*

Ladies and gentlemen, Laura and I would like to welcome you all to the White House. It's good to see a lot of our friends, and we're so honored you are here.

Tonight is a special night for us, but it's no more special—but especially special for three people, three birthday people: Governor Siegelman, Governor Ryan, and Governor Swift. Happy birthday.

I also want to welcome members of my Cabinet and my team who are here. I've assembled a fabulous team. They bring a lot of experience to their jobs. I'm really proud of the Cabinet members who have been Governors: Tommy Thompson, John Ashcroft, Tom Ridge, and Christie Whitman. They understand firsthand the issues that Governors face every day. And my administration is working hard to make sure the Federal Government is more responsive to your needs.

Since we met last, America has been attacked and has been wounded by terrorists. We've been inspired by acts of courage and generosity. And this Nation has confirmed a deep sense of national purpose. We're determined to protect the American people by fighting terror wherever it is found. This cause will take years, require the patience of the American people, and it will require participation of all levels of government.

And we've made a very good beginning. Our military has routed the Taliban, and

we're hunting down Al Qaida. We've worked to take preventive measures to stop any attack, and we're prepared to respond should they come.

The Governors have taken threats seriously, and you've acted quickly to confront them. And our Nation is grateful.

At every stage of this crisis, I have benefited from your counsel. I've been inspired by your leadership. I was touched by my friend George Pataki's calm demeanor during the crisis in New York. I know our Nation needs to develop a national strategy to protect the homeland, and that's why I picked a fellow Governor, a former Governor, and a good friend, Tom Ridge, to lead the effort.

America's Governors have displayed leadership at a time when history demanded it. And so it's with deep respect and gratitude that I offer this toast to the Governors of the United States.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:10 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Don Siegelman of Alabama; Gov. George H. Ryan of Illinois; Gov. Jane Swift of Massachusetts; and Gov. George E. Pataki of New York. This transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 25.

## Remarks on a Comprehensive Energy Policy *February 25, 2002*

Thank you all for coming today. I'm honored to be joined by Secretary of Energy Spence Abraham and Administrator Christie Todd Whitman of the Environmental Protection Agency. We're here to

discuss an energy plan, a comprehensive energy plan that recognizes that through technology, we can increase our national security and economic security by reducing demand for petrochemicals, and at the